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Memorandum for: RECORD

Subject: Schmidt Bundestag Address on European Security

Attached is a memorandum concerning remarks made by former chancellor Schmidt before West German Bundestag prepared [redacted] on 6 July 1984.

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Schmidt Bundestag Address on European Security

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Summary

Former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt recently delivered a speech to the Bundestag in which he called for increased Franco-West German cooperation on defense matters. He also advocated raising the nuclear threshold by eliminating West German tactical nuclear forces. Schmidt's remarks are consistent with a keynote speech he delivered at the May 1984 Social Democratic party congress and reflect his party's security platform. If adopted, his proposal, in effect, would draw French forces back into the NATO integrated military structure and would substantially increase French and West German responsibility for West European defense.

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The Kohl government has not taken a position on Schmidt's proposals. In general, however, it probably supports Schmidt's call for closer Franco-West German defense cooperation, since it demonstrate to the West German public Kohl's strong ties to other West European capitals and his independence from the United States. The government, however, will oppose the withdrawal of US troops from West Germany, and react positively to the commitment of French divisions to NATO. Bonn is also likely to reject eliminating the Bundeswehr's tactical nuclear capabilities, which implies a fundamental change in NATO strategy that Bonn is not yet ready to support. In the short-term, however, Kohl and the West German public almost certainly do not expect a positive French response to Schmidt's proposals. We expect the Kohl government feels little obligation to respond to them specifically at this time.

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] European Issues Division, Office of European Analysis. Comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to [redacted] Chief, European Issues Division, EURA [redacted]

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Background

Since the 1950s, the West German public has strongly supported NATO and the US contribution to West European defense. Recently, these attitudes have withstood the strains of INF deployments and debate among West German security experts on the credibility of NATO strategy. Polls conducted late last year showed that 78 percent of West Germans back their country's membership in NATO, and 69 percent expressed the belief that American troops stationed in West Germany serve the interests of both the US and West Germany. [redacted]

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On the other hand, West Germans have expressed great concern over INF deployment and the danger of a nuclear holocaust. Doubts about the credibility of NATO's conventional capability have led West German defense experts to question NATO's excessive reliance on nuclear deterrence. The Kohl government has taken note of this concern and has emphasized its interest in improving West Germany's conventional force structure. Rather than seeking additional funds for the defense budget, however, Kohl has concentrated on rationalizing current programs and on strengthening Franco-German relations. He enthusiastically supports French efforts to reinvigorate the Western European Union to the extent that they are designed to strengthen rather than supplant NATO. The Social Democratic Party also supports improving conventional defense capabilities and reinvigorating the WEU. [redacted]

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Schmidt's Bundestag Address

In his 28 June speech to the Bundestag, former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, referring to the Nunn Amendment's proposal to reduce US forces in Europe, called for strengthened Franco-West German defense cooperation, including French commitment of 12 divisions to West European defense within the NATO framework. Schmidt contended that these 12 divisions, plus 18 divisions that West Germany would mobilize, could more than compensate for any US reduction (see attachment). [redacted]

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A key element of the Schmidt proposal is the requirement for France to commit forces to the defense of West Germany--an objective long sought by the SPD as well as the Kohl government. [redacted]

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Schmidt acknowledged that additional conventional weapons and equipment--and thus more defense funds--would be required to field a full 18-division German force, but he contended that the money could be found by sacrificing the Bundeswehr's tactical nuclear capabilities. [redacted]

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Appeal to West German Public

Schmidt's proposal could have considerable appeal to the West German public:

- It would preserve the US strategic nuclear guarantee but would raise the nuclear threshold by eliminating the need for tactical nuclear weapons.
- It would give West Germany a greater role in and, hence, influence over its own national security.
- According to Schmidt, it would not require increased defense expenditures. [redacted]

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We believe that the Schmidt proposal reflects a belief that the West German public would be attracted to the notion of raising the nuclear threshold and eventually reducing US troop strength in West Germany. Opinion polls and media commentary suggest that West Germans recognize and accept their reliance on the United States. Nonetheless, we believe that West Germans could accept a US troop reduction that appeared to give Bonn a greater voice in NATO defense questions and that did not threaten the US nuclear guarantee. The public, however, would also have to be convinced that a French-West German conventional defense force was effective and credible. [redacted]

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Kohl Government's Response

The Kohl government has not yet responded to Schmidt's remarks, but Kohl probably will use elements of the speech to support his pursuit of closer French-West German defense relations within the NATO framework. Indeed, the Kohl government has reacted enthusiastically to recent signs of French willingness to increase bilateral defense cooperation and would like to build on this beginning. [redacted]

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Bonn had responded positively to French efforts to reinvigorate the WEU in hopes of gaining French guarantees for the conventional and nuclear defense of West Germany and to demonstrate symbolically to the West German public the Kohl government's strong ties to other West European capitals and its independence from the United States. The Kohl government would enthusiastically accept any French offer to commit conventional forces to West German defense. [redacted]

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While Kohl probably believes the Schmidt proposals are a useful reminder to the French that West Germany is interested in genuine defense cooperation, Kohl no doubt questions the feasibility of the proposals. The government will likely reject

suggestions that the number of US forces in West Germany could be reduced and oppose any efforts to eliminate West Germany's tactical nuclear capabilities.

- Kohl will oppose Schmidt's calls for increased West German defense contributions to compensate for possible US troop reductions in part because of the severe West German manpower crunch. Perhaps the most crucial defense decisions now facing the Kohl government involve the need to meet military manpower requirements in the face of a rapidly declining manpower pool. Bonn is unlikely to aggravate this problem by taking on added burdens.
- The Kohl government also will reject Schmidt's renunciation of West German tactical nuclear forces. The Schmidt proposal not only calls into question the essence of NATO strategy, since it sacrifices one leg of the deterrent triad, but also would necessitate vastly improved conventional forces. It is highly unlikely that funds currently budgeted for Bundeswehr tactical nuclear weapons would be sufficient to pay the costs of a major conventional force improvement program. In fact, West Germany is experiencing considerable difficulty in meeting existing NATO conventional force goals: we estimate that Bonn requires \$13 billion more than is now in national plans to meet NATO requirements over the next five years. [redacted]

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AttachmentFrench and West German Land Forces**France**1. Ground Combat Units*

<u>Major Tactical Units</u>	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>Approximate Unit Strength</u>
Armored Divisions	8	7,000
Infantry Divisions	4	6,900
Overseas Infantry Division	1	8,670
Alpine Division	1	9,460
Airborne Division	1	15,545
Foreign Legion Group	1	8,000
Overseas Regiments	13	600

2. Mobilizeable Forces

Under the existing mobilization concept, 14 reserve divisions are to be organized to augment the 15 active divisions. The divisions will be composed of one light armored regiment, two infantry regiments, a command and support regiment, and an engineer company. The core personnel for four of the divisions are to be taken from military schools, and the remaining 10 divisions are to be activated by cadre taken from active units. Equipment for reserve divisions is to be furnished by the active units and schools. Full mobilization would be reached by M+11 days. This system of mobilization will be revamped by the Five-Year Defense Plan for 1984-88. Defense goals still appear to include a total established Army mobilization force of about 526,000 personnel. The new mobilization system will be similar to the West German plan to have active units manned only by a cadre in peacetime which is filled out by reservists in emergencies.

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*The French Army is currently organized into a field army of three corps, one of which is located in West Germany. The II French Corps, with headquarters in Baden-Baden, consists of three armored divisions. France does not participate in NATO's integrated military structure.

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